

Will Tour TBI Clinic, Meet with Patients

Las Cruces, NM – On Sunday, June 27th, Congressman Harry Teague will meet with officials at Ft. Bliss and the William Beaumont Army Medical Center (WBAMC) to discuss Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) treatment at Ft. Bliss and in the military. Teague will meet with WBAMC Commander Colonel James Baunchalk to further discuss his responses to the letter that Teague and members of the Invisible Wounds Caucus sent regarding recent allegations of insufficient care for soldiers suffering from TBI. The letter was prompted by

[reports](#)

that soldiers returning from war with TBI have struggled with months long waits to be seen by a doctor, inadequate care, and major delays in the opening of Ft. Bliss' TBI Clinic.

Fort Bliss finally awarded a contract for the installation of needed telecommunications equipment at the Building 805 TBI center one day after Teague's letter – clearing the way for the facility to open.

Teague will also visit the Mentis Neuro Rehabilitation Center in El Paso, a private rehabilitation clinic in El Paso that treats patients suffering from TBI. He will meet with the staff and receive a tour of the facility in order to learn about the treatment the center offers. He will also visit with patients at the facility and listen to their concerns.

Congressman Teague will be available to meet with interested media following his tour of Mentis Neuro Rehabilitation Center.

Yesterday, Harry Teague [sent a letter](#) to Colonel Baunchalk outlining his priorities for the meeting. In the letter, Teague also commented on Baunchalk's response to the inquiry, writing:

- In response to my question about the military's approach to TBI care compared to care outside the military, you stated that as a level 2 DOD facility for TBI, Fort Bliss only manages care for mild and moderate TBI and that more severe cases are referred to other programs. You additionally state the scope of practice and care that members of your TBI team provide is consistent with the care delivered by professionals in a civilian medical setting. In our meeting, I would like to further examine how the *overall* quality of TBI care at Fort Bliss serves our soldiers compared to what they may have access to in civilian medicine. The medical professionals at Fort Bliss are, I am sure, dedicated to their work. However, I would like to ensure that the system of TBI care, in general, adequately addresses the needs of our service members and is adequately resourced.

- In response to my question about Building 805, you stated that the building was constructed for the purpose of conducting initial screening evaluation and was located next to the Deployment Readiness Center to increase the efficiency of screening. You say delays have not impacted care because the facility is replacing current facilities, and that a contract installing telecommunications infrastructure was awarded on June 17 with an estimated work completion date of June 25. When will the facility open, and how will its operation improve screening and care?

- In response to my question about the challenges of providing the highest level of TBI care, you only responded by saying that the primary challenge has been recruiting and retaining

highly qualified medical professionals. TBI is one of the signature wounds of our wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, and some have estimated that almost 20 percent of service members experience traumatic brain injuries. The challenges in comprehensively addressing TBI are enormous. I am sure that you face other significant challenges in providing TBI care than the recruitment of medical professionals, and I look forward to discussing this. Additionally, I look forward to examining whether or not Fort Bliss has an adequate number of medical professionals to identify and treat the cases of TBI for which it is responsible.

To view the full text of the letter, please [click here](#).

Sunday, June 27th:

WHAT: Meeting with Colonel James Baunchaulk

WHERE: Beaumont Army Medical Center, 5005 N Piedras St, El Paso

WHEN: 9:00 AM – 9:30 AM

WHAT: Tour of the TBI Rehabilitation Clinic

WHERE: Mentis Neuro Rehabilitation Center, 1831 Murchison Dr, El Paso

WHEN: 10:00 AM – 11:00 AM

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